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Gold Star Mothers to host military suicide awareness walk-a-thon

PAW PAW - American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. (AGSM) will host its third Military Suicide Awareness Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, May 18. Registration begins at noon with the walk at 1 p.m. The walk starts and ends in the Maple City Veterans Memorial Park, 510 E. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw.

"This is a family friendly event. Come show your support and help bring awareness to military suicide," said Laura De Roo, president, American Gold Star Mothers, Western Michigan Chapter.De Roo said it is not too late to donate new items for the group's Silent Auction. Donations can be dropped off at the Maple City Veterans Memorial Park on Sunday, May 18, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monetary donations may be made payable to "AGSM – Western Michigan Chapter" and mailed to: AGSM – Western Michigan Chapter, 23582 Laurel Glen Ave., Mattawan, MI, 49071. Donations are tax deductible. The group's EIN number is 92-1067877.AGSM – Western Michigan Chapter is a group of local area moms whose children have died while on active duty in the nation's Armed Forces. AGSM also has associate members, members of the fallen hero's immediate family, who support the AGSM mission. AGSM is a non-profit 501(c)3 service organization. The Western Michigan Chapter was chartered by the national board in May 2011. The organization's motto, which the group lives out is: "Finding strength in the fellowship of other Gold Star Mothers who strive to keep the memory of our sons and daughters alive by working to help veterans, those currently serving in the military, their families and our communities."

For more information on American Gold Star Mothers, visit: www.americangoldstarmothers.org.

Paz is Mattawan's first ever to win award

Alejandra Tienda Paz, a senior at Mattawan High School, became the district's first ever recipient of the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy. She earned the prestigious recognition for her proficiency in both English and Spanish and will receive a special seal on her diploma. The district said several more students are on track to earn this honor next year. The MI Seal of Biliteracy celebrates students who have achieved a high level of skill in English and an-other world language.

Paw Paw High School mural sparks mental health conversations

PAW PAW - At Paw Paw High School, Art Teacher Sarah Bentley and English Teacher Sean Kubik, along with their students, are collaborating with visiting artist, Marlo Broughton, to create an artistic outdoor mural that celebrates the community and encourages mental health discussions among students.

The project is a giant leap of faith and a way for Sarah Bentley to honor the life of her teenage son, who lost his battle with mental health last fall. Through the impact of this mural, the collective goal is to create a positive, inspiring message that not only welcomes students but also sparks real conversations about mental health struggles.

The Detroit-based artist, also known as MARLOBRO, is an American Contemporary Artist and designer who got his start working with cousin and founder Tommey Walker of the "Detroit VS Everybody" brand. Broughton began as a graffiti artist, moved on to study industrial design and now makes acrylic paintings on canvas and large-scale mural paintings.

Working side-by-side with students, Broughton is painting and adding original poetry to this larger-than-life mural.

A massive brick wall at the west entrance of Paw Paw High School, where school buses arrive, is being transformed into a large, colorful mural that welcomes students at the beginning of their day and bids them farewell at the end of the day.

Weather permitting, the work that began on May 4, is scheduled to be completed in just four days: May 7, 8, 9 and 13. With an initial goal of raising $5,000 to cover project expenses, community members, businesses and non-profits have already started donating. If others wish to donate to this project and future high school mural projects, a secure fundraising page has been created on the Paw Paw Public School district's website. "This is an opportunity for members of the community to be part of something special. No donation is too small, and anonymous donations are welcome," said PPPS Superintendent Jeremy Davison.

Upgrades made at Paw Paw Waste and Recycling Center

Paw Paw Paw Township, along with the Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) made several updates over the last year to the Paw Paw Waste and Recycling Center, 38016 W. Red Arrow Highway, Paw Paw. Shown in photo from left, Paw Paw Township Supervisor, Tom Palenick, Van Buren Conservation District Director, Emilly Hickmott, Van Buren Con-servation District Recycling and Material Management Coordinator, Kalli Marshall, Paw Paw Township Treasurer, Lisa Zinkil, and Paw Paw Township Clerk, Rebecca Payne.
Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

PAW PAW - Paw Paw Township, along with the Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) made some big changes with upgrades over the last year at the Paw Paw Waste and Recycling Center, 38016 W. Red Arrow Highway, Paw Paw.

Paw Paw Township and Van Buren Conservation District officials said the upgrades will bring residents a seamless experience for their recycling and waste needs.

"With this initiative, we look forward to a cleaner community. Not only are we doing a service to our people with the project, we are also doing a service for the land and water. Our items like paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, and even tires can be recycled and unsightly items like destroyed furniture can be taken care of properly rather than dumped into ditches and waterways," said Kalli Marshall, Van Buren Conservation District's Recycling and Material Management Coordinator.

"We thank the many folks who made this possible: our municipal partners, county commissioners, and grant providers for their hard work, funding, and support. Without this partnership, this project would not have been possible. The Van Buren Conservation District is proud to have been able to provide assistance to the community by applying and managing the grant and assisting the community through the project. Our efforts have created a true center - upgrades include pouring concrete pads for the recycling containers to sit on, as well as applying asphalt to the entire drive. The township updated all the buildings on site with new siding and roofing. Additionally, a new building was added to house an attendant to help with recycling cost recovery. A new fence was installed along with cameras for site security. To complete this project, all new wayfinding and educational signage was added," said Marshall.

The waste and recycling center is now accepting tires from Paw Paw Township residents. Standard vehicle tires can be dropped off any day the transfer station is open. The tire drop off is in the north end of the transfer station across from brush drop off. Township officials will be marking it with signage eventually. Township residents are allowed to drop off four tires a day, when the transfer station is open. Tires from non-residents will also be accepted at a cost of $5 a tire, with a maximum of four tires a day. The Paw Paw Township Waste and Recycling Center is open to the public, Tuesdays, from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Fridays, from 1 to 4 p.m. (April - September only) and Saturdays, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Recycling drop off is free to Paw Paw Township residents with a recycling pass. A fee schedule can be found at the station or at the municipal halls. Community members outside of Paw Paw Township can purchase an annual recycling pass for $50 a year.

Funding for this project was made possible through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Recycling Infrastructure Grant and The Recycling Partnership. Matching funds were provided by municipal partners and the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners.

Tools taken from Almena construction site

Deputies took a larceny from a construction site in Almena Township. Numerous tools were taken, many of which were Milwaukee brand. “Anyone with any information on this is asked to call our office,” said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Two Van Buren County Sheriff’s deputies attended Taser Instructor School at Grand Valley State University. They are now certified to teach taser school.

Deputies handled an incident in Bloomingdale Township where a vehicle was partially in the ditch. “It was found that the driver was passed out behind the wheel. The lone occupant was not cooperative with deputies during the investigation. The driver was lodged for OUID (operating under the influence of drugs),” said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a traffic crash in the Village of Lawton. “It was found that the 17-year-old driver crashed his mom’s 2019 F-150 into Welch’s fence and a village light post. The crash was reported several hours after the incident, and no one was injured,” said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a hit and run traffic crash in Decatur Township. That crash involved a red Jeep Cherokee going off the roadway, struck a sign and then hit a house. Shortly after fleeing the scene, deputies handled another crash and found it was the same vehicle and occupants from the hit and run. This crash was in Paw Paw Township, and they left the roadway crashing into trees. The occupants were not cooperative, and the 19-year-old driver from Kalamazoo was lodged for operating under the influence of alcohol and leaving the scene of a crash.

Deputies made 529 traffic stops in April, bringing the total for the year to 1,680. Deputies handled 798 calls for service in April, bringing the total for the year to 3,102, according to Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a domestic violence call in Keeler Township. It was found that the male showed up at a location where the female was at setting in her car. “There were conflicting accounts what took place, but one account was he was leaning in her car through an open window, and she took off. The male did have road rash and called from the hospital he went to for treatment. She also called but had a different story. It’s an ongoing investigation at this point,” said Sheriff Abbott.

Deputies handled a single vehicle crash in Lawrence Township. It was found the driver straightened out a curve, left the roadway, hit a guide wire to a power pole, then a tree. The driver didn’t sustain any injuries and was lodged for operating under the influence of alcohol.

Katie McMillen graduated from the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Law Enforcement Program this week. “We are looking forward to her joining our Uniform Response Division,” said Sheriff Abbott.

Lee Township opens time capsule

By Gari Voss

Jackie Lindsey and Dan Ciokiewicz of Pullman, MI stand behind the items which were recovered from the Time Capsule buried in the Lee Township Cemetery in 2000. The items reflect the events in Lee Township at the turn of the millennium. Photo: G Voss

The Lee Township Time Capsule that was buried in the Lee Township Cemetery in 2000 was opened before the Lee Township Meeting on Monday, May 12, 2025. Jackie Lindsey and Dan Ciokiewicz helped do the honors. The two were part of the original team who gathered the historic documents and memorabilia for the 2000 Capsule.

Once opened, those in attendance found copies from the VFW and VFW Auxiliary with the names of the members at that time. The Lee Township Fire Department was well represented in pictures with names. A notebook compiled by the late George Wesby of his family’s retreat was discovered along with a notebook compiled by Deborah Laraway which gave a comprehensive history of Pullman from the time it was called Hoppertown.

Ciokiewicz is in the process of gathering the contents for the Time Capsule 2025 which will be opened in 2050. All are invited to contribute to the project. Items need to be historic in nature.

SHAE’s to host pancake breakfast

South Haven Emergency Services (SHAES) will host its traditional Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, May 25 at its Blue Star Station from 7:30 to 11 a.m.

The breakfast will be served at the station in addition to being available via drive-thru. Kids are invited to see the fire trucks up close.

The menu will consist of pancakes, scrambled eggs, link sausage and drinks.

Instead of a fixed meal price, patrons are being asked to make a donation thanks to some generous contributions of supplies from local businesses. Proceeds will go toward the ongoing fund raising for a new LED message board to be displayed outside the Blue Star station.

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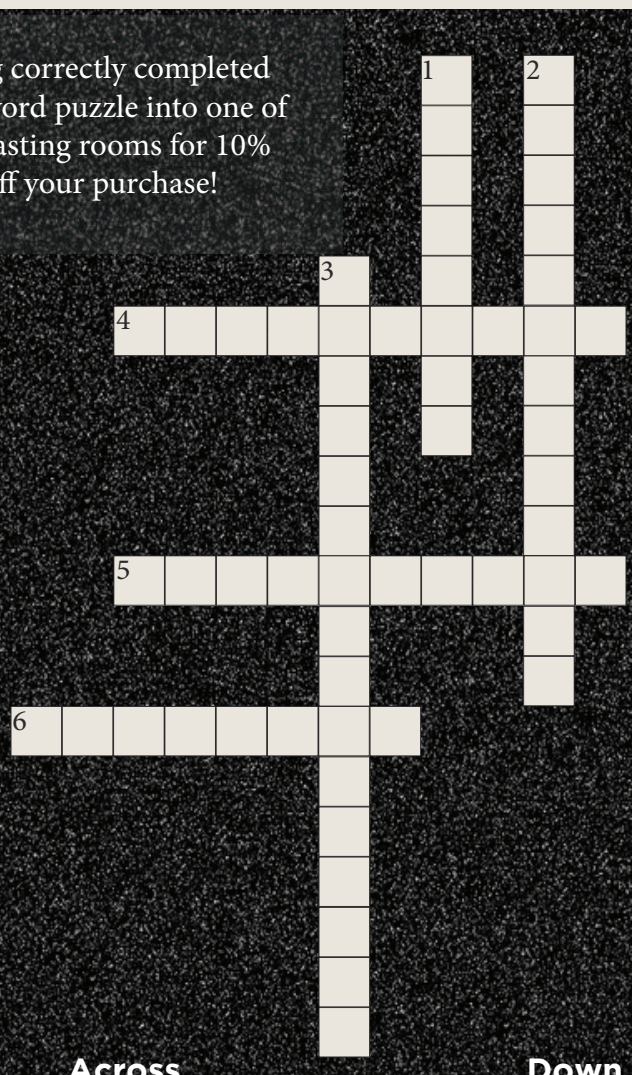

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Former SH High School principal receives honorary degree

By James Windell

John Yelding, once the principal at South Haven High School, was presented with an honorary degree during the Hope College Commencement ceremony for the Class of 2025 on Sunday, May 4, at Ray and Sue Smith Stadium.

Yelding, who is still actively involved at Hope College, joined the Hope faculty in 1994 after serving as a teacher and administrator in K-12 education in Covert and South Haven for 25 years. He says that he was surprised when he learned he would be awarded the Doctorate of Humane Letters, an honorary degree.

"It was absolutely a surprise," Dr. Yelding said in an interview following the ceremony. "They actually tricked me because I thought I was going to a meeting when they told me. I don't get fooled very often, but they got me this time."

He said it might be a surprise to others to learn that even though he supposedly retired in 2019 he is still very active on campus. His current work and activities include teaching Encounter with Cultures, co-directing the Hope Comes to Watts Program, mentoring Holland High School students in the education department's Early College Program, being involved in scholarship selection and hiring committees, and serving on the Board of Directors of Watts Learning Center in Los Angeles, California.

He is very proud of the Hope Comes to Watts Program, which has been offering a unique experience to Hope students since 2013. "This is a program in which we take students out to Los Angeles and we work in the elementary and middle school with a charter organization called the Watts Learning Center," Yelding says. "Students get three weeks of intense time in the classroom and in a racially and ethnically diverse setting. It's a very rich experience for them."

Yelding and other faculty members take seven to 12 students each year to Watts. "It's been an incredible learning experience for our kids," he says. "But it is also a great experience for the students in Watts who often feel very closely connected to our young students."

Born and raised in South Haven, Yelding earned his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University in 1969, a master's degree in educational leadership from Western Michigan University in 1981, and has completed extensive studies in educational leadership, diversity education, and communication at Western Michigan University.

After teaching in South Haven schools for 12 years, he accepted a position in Coloma as an assistant principal. He moved up to become a middle school and junior high principal. "Then, in 1987 I came back to South Haven to become principal at the high school," Yelding recalls. "I was there for 7 years. During that time, I served a summer as interim Superintendent of Schools."

When he was offered a position at Hope College in 1994, he accepted the offer and "I've been there ever since, and I'm now wrapping up my 31st year," he says.

Among other involvements at Hope College, he has also served on the advisory boards of the Phelps Scholars Program and the Hope College TRIO Upward Bound Program for area high school students, and he has led sessions during the college's Critical Issues Symposium and Winter Happening events. In January 2024, he presented the college's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil Rights Lecture.

In 2003, Yelding received a Michigan Campus Compact "Faculty/Staff Community Service-Learning Award." He received the college's "Provost's Award for Service to the Academic Program" in 2009, the "Vanderbush-Weller Development Fund" award for strong, positive impact on students in 2011, and "Motoichiro Global Courage Award" in 2016. He has also been recognized with several awards presented by student organizations on the Hope College campus.

As he looks back on his career, he says he went into teaching in the beginning because it felt very natural. "I believed that the reason we're here is to help and serve others," he says. "So what better place to do that but in the classroom and in the education field."

Yelding says that when he was a young boy he was taught that education was the way forward. "When I started out in teaching, I had a goal of helping as many students as possible," he says. "I still have that goal. Helping students get a quality education is the passkey to a brighter future."

Sunberry Beverages union workers in Paw Paw ratify new contract

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 951 voted this week to overwhelmingly ratify a new contract at Sunberry Beverages, a beverage manufacturing plant located in Paw Paw, MI, containing two wage increases within the first eight months of the contract; elimination of seasonal employee status, making all employees full-time and eligible for all benefits; significant improvements to paid time off; increases to the 401(k) match; and a choice of three different health insurance plans to fit different coverage needs.

UFCW 951 is the largest private sector union in the state, representing over 30,000 workers in a variety of industries, approximately 60 of which are Sunberry workers. The contract is effective May 11, 2025, and expires on May 13, 2028.

The workers at Sunberry Beverages have been working under a union contract that was originally signed in May 2022 when the plant was owned by Knouse Foods, which operated the facility for several decades as a fruit processing plant. Sunberry Beverages acquired the plant from Knouse Foods and officially took over day-to-day operations on October 1, 2023. When the new owners took over, they recognized the union contract in place but changes to the production methods since then have greatly impacted workers in the plant.

"After the change in ownership, job duties and responsibilities at the plant changed significantly for the union members," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951 president and chief negotiator for the talks, said. "I am proud of the members who served on the bargaining committee and worked together to achieve contract gains that improve the lives of their fellow members. It's important for the company to recognize how valuable the Sunberry workers are and reward their hard work and loyalty with a strong contract."

Devan Harris, a union steward and bargaining committee member from Sunberry, said he enjoyed the contract bargaining experience and learned a lot from it.

"This was my first time on a bargaining committee," said Harris. "It was a learning experience. I like the fact that you get to learn about what the company is going to be offering to you so we could counteroffer. We wanted to make sure we got all the benefits that we could get. I like the way the contract is written, it works for new hires, and it works for the veteran employees, like myself. I am looking at this contact as a new opportunity because we have a lot of building to do under the new ownership."

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County students take part in Ag Awareness Days

Ag Awareness Days, held Tuesday and Wednesday, May 6 and 7, at the Van Buren Youth fairgrounds, featured 14 different stations that nearly 700 school-aged children from eight Van Buren County school district took part in. Volunteers at each of ag related or animal station presented information on that station. Courier-Leader photos/Paul Garrod

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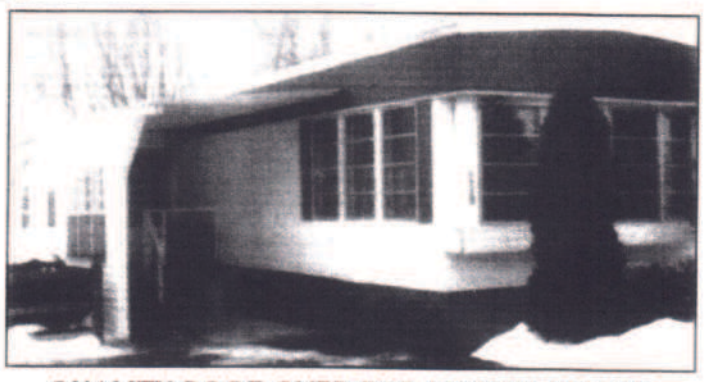

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Sunflower Film Festival to be held next month in Paw Paw

PAW PAW – The Sunflower Film Festival returns for its second annual celebration, bringing together filmmakers, artists, and audiences to foster conversations around mental health awareness and resilience through the power of storytelling.

Taking place from June 19 - 22, at The Lucky Wolf, 404 E. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, this year's festival will honor the life and legacy of India Deibler-Love, whose spirit continues to inspire the event and the work of the India Love Sunflower Foundation. The annual festival is the foundation's flagship event. In addition to a curated selection of films, the event will also include interactive panels, and a variety of musical performances, and satellite screenings.

"When I lost my wife, India, to suicide, I was torn apart but found the strength to keep going each day because of our three young children," said Jason Deibler-Love, Founder, Sunflower Film Festival / President, India Love Sunflower Foundation. "I was aware of her childhood trauma but knew little about mental health and the importance of its awareness or societal impact. Within months of her death, I learned more than I had ever known about mental health and its impact on our lives. It was too late for me to help India, but I wanted to find a way to help others. The India Love Sunflower Foundation and the Sunflower Film Festival are intended to spread awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health in a way that is meaningful, approachable, and impactful. India's legacy is not only the beautiful children she left behind but also the profound impact and memories she shared with so many before she left us, and I pray we can continue to share her positive influence going forward."

"My time as Operations Director for the Sundance Film Festival reveals just how vital festivals are for sparking connection and dialogue," said Ralph Rivera, Director, Sunflower Film Festival. "The Sunflower Film Festival is about opening gates and building bridges. Our aim for the festival is simple: we want people to leave feeling enlightened, understanding that mental health struggles are common, and most importantly, feeling empowered to share the message that with the right support, there is always hope. We want them to leave recognizing that needing support – sometimes for a moment, sometimes lifelong – is a universal human experience."

"My love for India and Jason, my grief for the loss, and my wish to help uplift others and prevent this kind of grief are what drive me to be part of this festival – to help take our collective grief and make art about it, or at the very least, provide a platform for people who are doing so," said America Young, Programming Director, Sunflower Film Festival. "As we deliberated the submissions, many questions came up: What is a movie about mental health? What does it encompass? We carefully considered each film and are very proud of our line-up. This year's selected films run a wide range of genres and tones, but each one deftly touches on two very important themes for us: mental health and hope. We can also boast quite a few Michigan locals!"

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I SAW IT IN THE FLASHES

Speaker discusses history and issues of college sports business

By James Windell

If you love college sports but you are concerned about the impact of business and money on college sports, you are not alone.

More than 100 people showed up at the South Haven campus of Lake Michigan College on Thursday, May 8, 2025, to hear Professor Greg Dooley explore the topic of "The Big Business of College Sports."

Dooley, who teaches courses at the University of Michigan on the history of athletics, sports leadership, and NIL (Name, Image & Likeness), expressed his own concerns about how money was influencing college sports. In fact, he said when looking at the future of college athletics that it was a "tangled web."

For those who think that the issue of paying people to compete in college athletics is new, Dooley dispelled that notion at the outset of his presentation. "In 1852, in the first ever intercollegiate event between Harvard and Yale. It was a regatta…The people were actually paid and compensated in this first event," Dooley said.

He went on to cite a number of other incidents that demonstrated that college athletes since 1852 were paid for performing. For example, in 1894 in a University of Michigan football game seven of the 11 players for Michigan were not even students.

As a college football historian, Dooley was able to talk about the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the nonprofit organization that regulates college sports and its attempts to avoid paying college athletes. He noted that the NCAA in a hearing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court argued that their business model was based on not paying at athletes. The Supreme Court in a unanimous decision in this case ruled against the NCAA.

Dooley told the audience that from the beginning of college sports donors and sports fans developed schemes to funnel money to student athletes. Today, this practice is much more out in the open and courts have ruled in favor of athletes being compensated for their talents in sports.

"The power has shifted in recent years from the NCAA to athletes," Dooley said. Now, it is clear that athletes can be paid for playing sports, not just football, but for any college sports. Today, colleges are paying college athletes directly and Dooley said that the amount of money that will be going to players will increase.

Dooley concluded that he is not certain where this is headed. But he said that besides the fact that it is a tangled web is the worry as to how the paying of college athletes will affect college sports and the athletes themselves.

The intense interest in the subject of the big business of college sports was indicated by the audience peppering Dooley with questions – which he seemed only too happy to answer and offer his, sometimes candid, opinions.

The South Haven Speakers Series continues in September with a program on "Understanding Immigration." For more information, go to the Series website at southhavenspeakersseries.org.

Brothers Ralph to perform at First Congregational Church

By James Windell

When the Brothers Ralph perform at the First Congregational Church in South Haven on May 18, 2025, their music will tell a story of their spiritual journey.

Not that it is necessarily a sacred concert, but Connor and Spencer Ralph view their life's journey as one that is intensely spiritual. And when they tell their story through music it is also intensely personal.

"We will he painting a journey about what the spiritual journey was like from the really raw perspective of two brothers," says Connor Ralph. Conor and his brother Spencer talked about the concert during a recent phone conversation.

The brothers, who have been making music together since they were preschoolers, started out singing and playing instruments in church. Their music has been described as jazz/rock fusion with soaring vocals that are reminiscent of the Dave Matthews Band, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Neil Young.

"There's no doubt that the church and religion have been very important to us and our music," Connor said. "I identify with the prodigal son. There was a time in my life that I was away from the church. That was when I was out in Seattle and coming home was like the return of the prodigal son."

Their first experience performing was in a People's Church children choir in the Lansing area. They both joined the worship band when they were in middle school with Spencer playing the violin in the band. "Then I started a band in high school," recalls Connor, "and soon Spencer joined that band playing bass. We just continued to play in bands together ever since."

In the concert, they will be performing songs they composed that are on their debut album recorded in 2023 and titled "The Chronicles of Ralph." The songs in this album detail their childhood and reflect on the legacy of the Ralph family. That first album was recorded live in "busking" style in just two takes, using only acoustic guitar, electric bass, and foot percussion. Performing with them in this May 18 concert will be a percussionist.

"We're going to play our whole first album plus a couple of new songs we've been working on for our second album," Spencer said. "We both wrote the music and there's definitely both perspectives on the album."

Although the brothers say they each write new songs on their own, they then share them and arrange each other's music until each song sounds the way they want it to sound.

Although they have played in many festivals and bars, it's important to them that this concert is in a church. "My first church job ever was in a Congregational Church," Connor said. "I loved that church and so this concert will be super fun." Currently, Connor is the choir director at St. John's Lutheran Church in East Lansing.

"I would say that right now we are essentially living the church music dream," Connor said.

The Brothers Ralph will be performing at 3:00 pm on Sunday, May 18 at the First Congregational Church, 651 Phoenix Street., South Haven. Tickets are $20 at the door. For more information, call Diane and Lisa at 269-637-3804 (opt. 5).

Paw Paw Community Chorus spring concert held

The Paw Paw Community Chorus presented their annual Spring Concert, Sunday, May 4, at the Paw Paw United Methodist Church, 420 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw. The chorus was under the direction of Theresa Vaughn and accompanied on piano by Evonne Heystek.
Courier-Leader photo/ Paul Garrod

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VIEWPOINT

Release the Epstein files now

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

For some reason, the Trump administration, i.e. Attorney General Pam Bondi is slow walking the release of the Epstein files. If I remember correctly, it was a campaign promise to release them asap, and it's now been 130 days, and we know very little. We here that there are so many files and videos, that it will take so much time for the FBI to sort through it all. I don't buy that, 130 days is enough time.

Why the slow walking? Are too many people in high places implicated? I think we knew before this presidency that Prince Andrew, former president Bill Clinton and billionaire Bill Gates were allegedly involved with Epstein and his web of child trafficking. Each allegedly made trips to Lolita Island, just off the coast of St. Thomas, which was Epstein's remote playground where all sorts of sordid activities took place.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Virginia Giuffre committed suicide. She was 41 and left behind 3 children. Legacy news made very little mention of her death. But, in my mind, it is a big story, because Virginia was the main witness against Epstein and his cohorts. Why it was barely mentioned on TV or in newspapers is beyond me.

Giuffre's suicide was real, unlike Epstein's who supposedly hung himself in a jail cell under bizarre circumstances. Virginia died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in her Australian home.

She sued Epstein in 2009 but settled out of court. She sued Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's longtime partner, who is in jail for assisting Epstein in trafficking minors and won a substantial sum. She sued Prince Andrew in 2021 but again settled out of court. She won huge million-dollar settlements, particularly from Prince Andrew, who had no desire to be dragged through the U.S. court system, guilty or not.

But the money gain did not satisfy Virginia. She was abused physically and mentally throughout her teen years by Epstein and others and the scars left behind were too much to overcome. She struggled with shame and guilt. PTSD nightmares persisted as she relived the abuse daily.

She dealt with fear of not being believed, although the courts eventually validated her claims. She suffered with the loss of her teenage years and innocence. Daily, she had the pressure of being a public voice and having to be the most outspoken advocate representing the hundreds of other teens assaulted by Epstein and his friends.

Virginia Giuffre spoke up. She told her story and in the end it was too much to handle emotionally. Unfortunately, she's not alone when it comes to be speaking out against child predators. Victims would rather forget than have to endure the public scrutiny of others, particularly defense attorneys. Virginia, however, did tell her story, and is a hero for doing so.

Bondi needs to do what is right, no matter the consequences. No matter which public figure may be implicated. The public has a right to know. We owe it to Virginia Giuffre.

Life as Performance Art

G CORWIN STOPPEL

I caught the warning in a rural newspaper that now we are moving into planting season, watch out for slow-moving farm vehicles as they go from field to field or barn to field.

Good point to keep in mind now through the end of the growing season. Unless you are driving s a Sherman Tank, you and your vehicle really should not tangle with an Allis Chalmers, Case, Deere, International Harvester, Moline or other tractor make and model. Or get in a tussle with a big cultivator.

That applies later on to top combines, as well. Even passing them is dicey. A few weeks ago I was westbound on M-89 and stuck behind a slow convoy of cars and trucks. Leading the pack was a mammoth John Deere pulling a 12-bottom plow.

Sure enough, some fellow not interested in enjoying the scenery tried an end-run rush ahead and apparently misjudged everything. His car was in the ditch and he did not look happy with himself.

It could have been a lot worse. Late winter and early spring is a rough time for farmers. Once the temperature warms, they are in the machinery shed making sure every nut, bolt, belt and joint is lubricated and in place

When they start planting, the push long and hard to get everything done. Most are just kids at heart who love playing with their big toys. A few will even polish the tractor tires. Others will drive their tractor into town for a cup of coffee, just for the joy of being on the tractor seat, never mind that they don't have an enclosed and heated cab.

This year is rough for most farmers. Between bird flu, interest rates, weather forecasts and whatever our federal government is doing with tariffs, the American farmer is again taking it on the chin.

The government promises to do the right thing by them, but they have heard that song before. The last time there were tariffs and serious economic difficulties, more small farms sold out than ever before. Many who survived that rough time fear they might not be so lucky now.

Meanwhile farmers get blamed for the high cost of groceries even when it's not their fault. The other day I was in the grocery store's produce section when another customer went into rant about how the price of avocados had gone way up. He blamed American farmers even though the produce comes from Latin America.

Be nice. The farmers are on our side and we need them.

Another thing to keep in mind is that at this time of the year farmers are often hauling spreader-wagons loaded with a barnyard organic fertilizer from their fields. Good stuff for growing things, so this is an important part of their spring work.

Trust me; you do not want to get too close to the business end of a spreader. Do not be like the couple I saw in a car with New Jersey license plates. They got behind the tractor and wagon and decided to test their horn repeatedly, apparently believing that the longer they blew it, the faster the tractor would go.

This was not going to have a happy ending. All that horn blowing rattled the farmer, who mistakenly turned the wrong gizmo on the tractor. I suspected this might happen, so I backed way off and rolled up the windows. That powder-blue car was pelted with lumps of very wet, aromatic brown stuff.

Right away, they pulled over to the side of the road to inspect the damage. There was not much they could do but drive to the next town and hope it had a car wash.

I kept my distance as I followed behind the tractor and wagon, and less than a minute later the farmer turned off the road into his field. If only the folks in the out-of-state car had been more patient ... but then, theywouldn't have a story with which they could regale their friends once home.

While we are on the subject, if you see a "honey wagon" behind a tractor, keep your distance. "Honey wagon" is something of a misnomer because it does not smell sweet. Its contents are liquefied barnyard organic fertilizer and the aroma comes with extra potency. Keep your eyes on the bar at the back of the wagon and little nozzles on it.

The best thing to do is treat all tractors and farm equipment on the road like it is your Great Aunt Tildey taking her Olds 98 out for the first Sunday afternoon drive in a decade. Give the farmer some distance and don't fluster and rattle him or her.

Meanwhile, remember spring is when smaller wildlife likes to go for after-dark strolls. In particular, be wary of those cute little black-and-white creatures. Hitting one of them isn't as dangerous as a deer or even a turkey, but trust me you don't want to hit a skunk. Each and every one gives off an aroma that keeps on giving.

The good news is by July, when temperatures hit 90° the smell of the spreader or honey wagon will have mostly gone away.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

American conservative values outweigh liberal logic

Dear Editor.

We just returned from a short vacation to South Dakota and while visiting Mount Rushmore we made a mutual observation. Here we were in the presence of one of America's supreme man-made achievements honoring four of our nation's greatest patriots; George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Now nearly a century later, we have a loud but relatively small minority of citizens honoring the likes of illegal immigrants, criminals and anti-American reprobates. Unveiled last week in New York's Times Square is the left's most recent sociopolitical contribution, an anonymous 12', overweight, angry black woman. This kind of says it all doesn't it?

Every time I see images of these few very unhappy aging protesters in the national hands-off movement, I can't help but feel a bit sad for them. It's obvious that these folks don't realize that they missed the proverbial boat by some 50 years. Regardless of what city or state, these crowds all look the same, mostly retired, mostly white and angry. Apparently, no one has bothered to inform them up to now so I'll be the one to point out the elephant in the room (elephant, get it?). It's 2025 not 1969. Try as we might, there are few redo's in life, what time has passed has passed.

As pathetic as it is to watch someone at a 25-year high school class reunion behave for a night as if they were 17 again is the same as watching these bitter seniors pretending its 1965 Selma, the 1963 March on Washington, the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention or Woodstock. Those years were a learning experience for our nation with some devastating results.

Now to witness their tantrums and rants, these malcontent elders who are wallowing in their white guilt see themselves as 60's/70's protestors, most of whom I'm guessing were not. Having missed their first opportunity for civil disobedience they somehow think that they can now revel in what they originally missed. Much like watching 60–70-year-olds in a cover band visualizing themselves playing Filmore West with Janis Joplin and the Allman Brothers.

As a willing and active participant of the late 60's and early 70's, although my memory from that time can be a bit cloudy, there were a great many of us that recognized the hypocrisy, dishonesty, self-serving and destructive nature of the left. Many who began their political awareness on the left came to the realization that this search for liberty, justice and moral clarity had already been well established by our nation's founders some two hundred years prior. Although greed and evil have too often sidetracked America's original ideals, these principles have always been there, only waiting for us to return home as the proverbial prodigal son.

I find it encouraging when a liberal leaves the dark side and moves into the light. Ronald Reagan and Charlton Heston both began as active union loving liberals only to realize that what they had been searching for, both politically and socially already existed in the American Conservative movement.

More recently, Hawaiian Democrat Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard who was a rising star in the new Democrat Party recognized the error of her ways and joined the Republican Party. She is not the only convert in the second Trump administration as well as throughout our United States.

The quote" If you're not a liberal in your youth you have no heart and if you're still a liberal after thirty you have no brains" is most often attributed to Winston Churchill or Benjamin Disraeli. To demonstrate that things don't necessarily always remain the same, we are experiencing a metamorphosis in our nation with the realization that American Conservatives possess both the brains and the heart of the American people.

John R. Young
Hamilton Township

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Trump cuts not popular with reader

Dear Editor,

The following may not be familiar to many people who are watching the tremendous cuts being taken in various agencies, but I believe the following is worth mentioning. This year, there will be no statewide "Great Michigan Read" nor "Museum to Main Street"s exhibits traveling to rural Michigan. Also important to note, the "Dialogues on the "Experience of War" events will not be available to our Veterans. These are some of the wide range of Michigan Humanities Council's exhibits they will be unable to support since the annual budget was cut by 90%. (many thanks to Elon Musk and his DOGE buddies) These are not as devastating as those cuts the Trump Administration continues to make to NIH, CDC, or USAD (the latter agency cut the Emergency Assistance Program (TEFAP), greatly devastating food pantries). However, the above Michigan Humanities Council cuts matter to those who look forward to these exhibits. There are others such as AmerCorp that assist with disaster response and Veterans and Military Families. Have to get that money for the tax cut somewhere ... eh

Maureen Baker
Mattawan

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FLASHES

Yu-Lien The to perform at the Scott Club

By James Windell

Yu-Lien The, a classical pianist, will be performing at the Scott Club in a concert entitled "An Enchanting Concert of Character Pieces" on Sunday, May 18, 2025.

In a recent interview Yu-Lien The was asked what was meant by character pieces.

"A character piece is a short piece that presents one mood or one kind of image," The explained. "It's a piece that doesn't change character and it has one particular color, so to speak."

Some of the short character pieces she will be performing in her solo concert include works by Fanny Mendelssohn and Alexander Scriabin. Fanny Mendelssohn, the sister of the early Romantic composer Felix Mendelssohn, is certainly not as well-known as her brother. The will be doing her "Songs for Piano," four shorter pieces. However, The said that Fanny Mendelssohn actually wrote more than 100 works for the piano. "Because she was a woman she couldn't necessarily publish everything," The says, "so some are speculating that even some of Mendelssohn's compositions, that we think of by him, might have been her work."

Yu-Lien The, an assistant professor of keyboard at Western Michigan University, will also perform 24 short works by Alexander Scriabin, the Russian late Romantic era composer. "These are like short little preludes," The said. "They are ordered in keys and in relationships, and they work well together as a set."

Born in Amsterdam, Yu-Lien The grew up in Germany and began playing the piano at age five. Initially, she took lessons from her mother, but by the time she was 10 her mother realized she needed a more advanced piano instructor. By age 14, The was performing in public.

Since then, she has performed throughout the U.S., Europe and Southeast-Asia, including appearances as a soloist with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, the Kammerorchester Hannover and the Baroque Orchestra L'Arco. Other notable performances include a two-piano recital with Lori Sims of Messiaen's "Visions de l'Amen" in 2008 and a lecture recital of "The Other Diabelli-Variations" in 2012, both at the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

A prizewinner of the 12th International Piano Competition Viotti-Valsesia (Italy) and the Deutsche Musikwettbewerb, The was admitted to the National Concert Podium for Young Artists (Germany), which led to several concert tours with violinist Tomo Keller.

The is a champion of contemporary composers and has been involved in a number of commissions and world premieres. She frequently collaborates with saxophonists Joe Lulloff and Henning Schröder as well as composers Dorothy Chang, Keith Murphy and Carter Pann. During her tenure with the new music ensemble Opus21, she worked with composers Anna Clyne, David Lang and Frederic Rzewski, which culminated in premiere performances at Symphony Space (New York) as well as Zankel Hall at Carnegie in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

The said that she is really excited to be doing this program at the Scott Club. "Most of these pieces are kind of new for me, so this fun," she says. "It's been really joyful for me to study them and to practice."

The South Haven Scott Club, an all-volunteer organization that presents bimonthly arts and cultural programs, is located at 652 Phoenix Street, South Haven. The Yu-Lien The concert is on Sunday, May 18, at 3:00 pm. There is no charge for admission, but registration is requested by May 16, which can be done on the Scott Club website at info@scottclub.org

OBITUARIES

Marilyn Jean Benzie

Marilyn Jean Benzie, 88, of Paw Paw, passed away peacefully Thursday, May 8, 2025, at her home. She was born March 26, 1937, in Port Huron, Michigan, the daughter of Clarence C. Smith and Ella Pearl (McLean) Smith.

Marilyn loved going out to eat and socializing, while enjoying her cups of coffee. Trips to the casino were her highlight. In earlier years, she enjoyed fishing on the lake and taking trips. When it came to the kitchen, Marilyn was known for her baking, especially cakes.

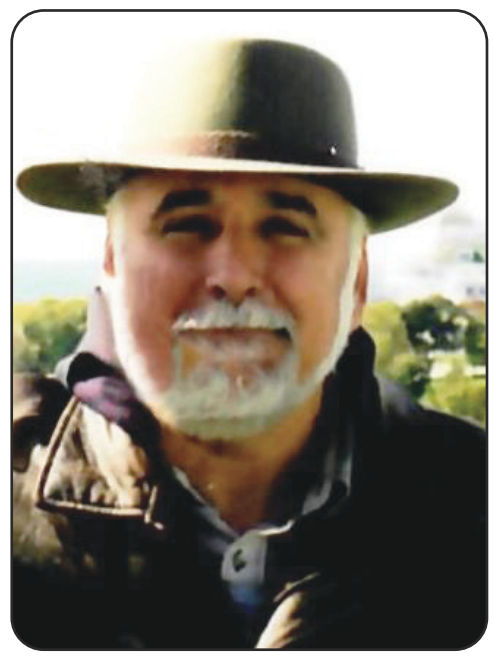
She is survived by her children, Anthony T. (Debbie) Benzie, Vickie S. Benzie, Frances A. (Barry) Buell and Stanley Benzie; six grandchildren, Cynthia (Brad) Stevens, Ashley Benzie, Jennifer (Kyle) Klooster, Amber (Ross) Ramlal, Jeanette (Bailey) Benzie and Abigayle Benzie; six great-grandchildren, Nathan, Ella, Brooklyn, Timothy, Cohen and Brayden; along with many nieces and nephews.

Marilyn was preceded in death by her husband, Anthony L. Benzie in 2019, along with her siblings, Bill, Betty, Marion, Helen, Dick, Jerry, Joe and Ed.

Family and friends are invited to visit Friday, May 16, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Adams Funeral Home, 502 West Michigan Ave., Paw Paw. Mass of Christian burial will follow on Saturday, May 17, at 11 a.m. at Saint Mary Catholic Church, Paw Paw. The burial will conclude at Saint Mary Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Centrica Care Navigators. Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at: www.adamspawpaw.com

Luis "Louie" Godines



LAWRENCE - Luis "Louie" Godines, 78, of Lawrence, MI, passed away Sunday, May 4, 2025, at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital, St. Joseph, MI. Louie was born July 29, 1946, in San Antonio, TX, to Francisco Godines and Juanita Munis.

On June 20, 1970, Louie married the love of his life, Marjorie Moser. Together, they raised two sons, Wyatt and Jeremy.

Louie was very active during his life, serving both his country and his community. Louie was a proud member of the United States Navy for four years, including one year in Vietnam. Once returning stateside, Louie became a lifelong member of the VFW Post 6248, Decatur. He worked as an electrical contractor for over 50 years and owned Midway Electric, Inc., Lawrence. He served on the Lawrence Township Zoning Commission for 15 years and dedicated many years as a volunteer and director for the Van Buren Youth Fair. Louie spent over 23 years as fair board director, with 12 of those years serving as fair board president. He was a charter member of the Southwest Michigan Horse and Buggy Club for 36 years and a member of the Van Buren Draft Horse Club for over 40 years.

Louie and Margie had many memorable adventures during their 55 wonderful years together. From buggy club campouts at the cabin in Irons, MI, spending cold winters with their horse in Ocala, to the Grand Canyon with friends, there was always time to enjoy love and laughter together. The close friendships made at the fair resulted in many fun memories hosting pig roasts at the house, with close to 400 people from the community coming to enjoy the meal and friendship. Never one to miss a tailgating party, Louie was an avid U of M football fan, holding season tickets for over 25 years.

Louie will be missed by his wife, Marjorie; his sons, Wyatt (Stephanie) Godines, and Jeremy Godines; his granddaughter, Sarah (Tanner) Brodhagen; his great-grandsons, Ty and Robbie; and his sisters, Susie Gonzales, and Olivia Guiterrez. He was also dearly loved by many close nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, and a host of special friends.

The family will receive guests from 3 p.m. until the time of the celebration of life ceremony beginning at 4 p.m., Saturday, May 17, at the VFW Post 6248, 560 N. Phelps St., Decatur.

Memorial contributions may be given to the Van Buren Draft Horse Club or to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation.

Mitchell Mierzejewski

Mitchell died at home on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 surrounded by his family. He was a man with a sense of adventure and loved the outdoors. Mitchell was born on May 18, 1995 and has been a resident of the area since 2006. He was a graduate of Paw Paw High School, class of 2013. He was preceded in death by his mother, Tracy; brother, Curtis Michener; and grandfathers: Raymond Mierzejewski and Wally Leeper. Surviving are his parents: Mark (Diane) Mierzejewski; two sisters: Chrissy Michener, Ashley (Mike) Hanley; nephew, Jonah; niece, Ariah; two brothers; grandmothers: Ingrid Leeper and Virginia Mierzejewski, along with many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Cremation has taken place and a service with a Celebration of Life will be held Saturday (MAY 31) at 12 noon at the Red Arrow Ministries, 31133 Red Arrow Highway. Mitchell and his beloved companion Bentley will be laid to rest with his mother in Spring Grove Cemetery in East Liverpool, OH. Please consider making a donation in Mitchell's name to your preferred mental health or addiction/recovery organization. Celebrate Mitchell's life online by sharing your favorite stories and photos on his dedicated webpage at BetzlerLifeStory.com. Betzler & Thompson Life Story Funeral Home, 60900 M-40 Hwy; Paw Paw (269) 657-3870.

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BRONSON

Gobles track and field team enters the championship meet season

Gobles seniors: L to R: Thomas Munoz, Mason Mansfield, Jackson Geiger, Zoie Wood, Elizabeth Smith, Kamari Shealy, Martina Pucello, Lilly Heintzman, Sasha Doll, Lilly Ashbrook (from May 9)

Back L to R: Jackson Geiger, Elizabeth Smith, Sasha Doll, Zoie Wood
Middle L to R: Nathan Ray, Steven Juarez
Front L to R: Mason Mansfield, Kamari Shealy (from May 7)

By John Raffel
Correspondent

This week marked the beginning of championship week. Monday, May 5, the boys traveled to Lawton for the SAC Championship Meet and the boys finished 10th overall among the 18 schools in the SAC.

The meet awards go to the following people. Tough as Nails went to Cole Ringel for racing 3200m relay, 1600m and 800m runs. PR award went to Jackson Geiger for improving in discus over 14 feet to throw 133-5 and MVP went to Mason Mansfield for improving on his 100m seed at the MHSAA State meet with a 11.23. Jose Boger improving 110 hurdles and

The boys finished their dual meet season with a 6-2 record losing to Saugatuck and Allegan, and beating South Haven, Bridgman, Coloma, Watervliet, Fennville, and Holland Black River.

Friday, May 9, the Tigers competed at home at the Gobles Invitational. They finished 5th place among the 21 schools in attendance. Some outstanding performances include the 1st place finishes for the 4x100m (Nathan Ray, Max Sager, Steven Juarez, and Mason Mansfield) relay team improving on their State Qualifying time with a 44.96. The 4x400m relay team (Nathan Ray, Max Sager, Mason Mansfield and David Sager) also ran the best time of the year and won the relay at 3:39.93 setting up a showdown at the regional meet. 2nd in the 4x200m (Nathan Ray, Max Sager, Steven Juarez, and Mason Mansfield) were 2nd place with a time of 3:35.09. Jackson Geiger 3rd in the Shot Put 43' 1 and Discus 118' 10. David Sager 5th in the 800m 2:07.74. Hunter Piper 6th in the Pole Vault 9'3. And the 4x800m relay team (Jonas Salefske, Cole Ringel, David Sager, and Hunter Piper) finished 6th place with a time of 9:16.86.

"It was a great day to be a Tiger," coach Marc Kline said. Saturday, May 17 the Tigers travel to New Buffalo for the Regional meet.

South Haven falls to Brandywine

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Even though South Haven Rams collected 10 hits to Brandywine's five, they still fell 8-7 on Thursday.

Wyatt Dotson, Jonathan Bevevino, and Jacob Bosma each collected two hits for South Haven Varsity Rams.

South Haven was right in it until Brandywine hit a sacrifice fly in the ninth inning.

A single by Isaac Chalupa put South Haven on the board in the top of the first.

Aalfs singled down the left field line following a 6-pitch at-bat, which helped Brandywine tie the game at one in the bottom of the firstAn error gave Brandywine the lead, 3-1, in the bottom of the second.

Bevevino doubled down the left field line, which helped South Haven tie the game at three in the top of the fourth.

"The guys played hard, showed a lot of guts coming from behind to tie the game up and then take the lead," coach David McWhinnie. "We hit the ball hard throughout the game and had some clutch hits when we needed them."

Even though South Haven Varsity Rams collected 10 hits to Lakewood Varsity Vikings's three, they still fell 9-7 on Saturday. Max Verseput, Charlie Morse, and Isaac Chalupa each collected two hits for South Haven Varsity Rams.

Lakewood rallied for the victory despite trailing 5-1 in the first.

An error put Lakewood Varsity Vikings on the board in the top of the first.

South Haven flipped the game on its head in the bottom of the first, scoring five runs on five hits to take the lead, 5-1. The biggest blow in the inning was a double by Jadon Schneider that drove in two.

A ground out by Schneider extended the South Haven's lead to 6-3 in the bottom of the third inning.

South Haven amassed 10 hits in the game. Schneider led South Haven with two runs batted in from the number eight spot in the lineup. The infielder went 1-for-3 on the day. Elijah Eddy stole two bases. South Haven stole four bases in the game.

South Haven defeated Dowagiac 9-3 on Saturday thanks in part to six runs in the third inning. Charlie Morse doubled, scoring one run, Isaac Chalupa singled, scoring one run, Max Verseput doubled, scoring one run, Jonathan Bevevino singled, scoring two runs, and Wyatt Dotson singled, scoring one run.

'Eli Eddy was tough on the mound only allowing 3 hits for Dowagiac. Our offense was hot again producing 9 runs on 9 hits The team kept the energy throughout the game allowing us to stay focused and add insurance runs late in the game," McWhinnie said.

Ribbon cutting held for new Lawton business

A ribbon cutting was held Monday, May 5, for The Wash laundromat. The laundromat opened April 18, in a building that formerly served as a pharmacy. Shown in photo from left, Lawton Downtown Development Authority member Donna Dluge, Cathy Piecyk, and her son, business owner, Tory Piecyk, and Lawton DDA members Zachary Shinabargar and Tom Osborne. Cathy Piecyk and her husband, Ray, are owners of the Big T restaurant in downtown Lawton. Courier- Leader photo/Paul Garrod

Bangor soccer team falls at Parchment

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — Antonio Robles, Head coach of Bangor varsity soccer, had his Vikings took the field Saturday at the Parchment Tournament. Game 1: Vs. Parchment (host). Final: 3–1 L

Goal: Andrea Barajas Saves: Solexey Calderon (5)

Game 2: Vs. Comstock Final: Draw (Comstock wins on PKs)

Goal: Barajas (assist: Isabella Macedo)

PK Goal: Madison Lennox. Saves: Calderon (3)

Bangor is 1-12-1.

Bangor tied Bloomingdale on Wednesday 2-2.

On May 15, Bangor will be at Fennville. On May 17, it will be the Bangor round robin tournament at Viking Stadium. Bangor will start by playing Covert at 9:30 a.m.

This will lead into the District 54 soccer tournament on May 21. Bangor will advance to the next round with a win.

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Lawton track boys runners-up

Greyson Burrous took two first place in the conference meet.

By John Raffel

LAWTON — Lawton Track & Field was in action at the SAC Conference Meet on Monday, May 5.

Boys team was conference runner-up.

Top performers:

Mason Mayne

1st in shot put - school record throw of 61' 3"

1st in discus - school record throw of 185' 6"

Greyson Burrous

1st in 100m - time of 11.06. School record time of 10.94 in prelims.

1st in 200m - time of 22.82. School record time of 22.52 in prelims.

Caiden Mitchell

3rd in discus - personal best throw of 138' 2".

4th in shot put - personal best throw of 45' 0".

4x200 relay

1st place time of 1:34.31

Team of Dillon Carlson, Jack Fletcher, Tyler McCartney, Greyson Burrous

4x100 relay

1st place time of 44.28.

Team of Dillon Carlson, Greyson Burrous, Tim Willoughby, & Jack Fletcher.

Dillon Carlson

2nd in 300 Low Hurdles - time of 42.18.

7th in 110 High Hurdles - time of 16.85.

Girls team was 12 out of 18 schools

Top performers were:

Tiara Ellis

5th in 100m - time of 13.59.

Haile Bishop

6th in 300 Low Hurdles - personal best time of 51.51.

Belle Karsen

7th in shot put - personal best throw of 32' 5".

Girls pole vaulters

Megan Robertson - 3rd w/ vault of 8' 6"

Daisy Karsen - 4th w/ vault of 8' 6"

Alyssa McNally - 6th w/ vault of 8' 0"

Mattawan baseball continues to win

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — It was a good week for Mattawan's baseball team and coach Brett Vaughn.

On Thursday, May 8 in game 1 "we came out ahead in game 1, 10-0 against Portage Northern,: Vaughn said. "Maxx Vanantwerp threw a five-inning complete game. He allowed 0 runs, on 3 hits, and striking out two. Offensively Troy Scarff, Ethan Bouma, Jake Vrba, and Tyson Stratton each had 2 hits to lead the offense.

"In game 2 we came out on top 14-4. Kaden Jominy threw four innings allowing only one hit, while striking out eight and walking one. Kaden Jominy and Troy Scarff added two hits to spark the Wildcat offense.

On May 10 vs. Buchanan, "we came out on top 6-5 on a walkoff single from Nolan Jominy to score Patrick Dougherty from 3rd. Walsh, Shackelford, and Houseman combined to strikeout 13. Troy Scarff once again had two hits to lead the offense.

"In game 2 we got the win 9-0. Wilder, Fowler, and Nolan Jominy combined to throw a one-hitter. We are now 13-4-4 on the season."

Whipple leading Lawton softball

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWTON — Amira Whipple has played three positions for Lawton Varsity Blue Devils. Whipple's primary position is right field. Whipple has put together six quality at bats this season.

Lawton Varsity Blue Devils has a 8-10 record this season. Payton Potter's 1.394 OPS leads Lawton Varsity Blue Devils. The infielder has a 0.667 OBP and a 0.727 slugging percentage this season. Paityn Beam leads Lawton Varsity Blue Devils with 30 and one-third innings pitched. Aubri Conklin leads Lawton Varsity Blue Devils with 65 total fielding chances this season. Conklin's primary position is catcher.

Lawton swept Howardsville Christian on Monday. 8-4 and 13-3.

In the first game, Lily McCorry collected four hits in four at bats with four singles.

Conklin was the starting and winning pitcher for Lawton which had 20 hits. Conklin and Gia Bridge had multiple hits. McCorry stole two bases.

In the second game Kaidance Beam and Lily McCorry had two hits apiece.

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VanderMeeden having strong season for 24-1 Paw Paw

By John Raffel
Correspondent

For Paw Paw Cami VanderMeeden hits and pitches for PP Varsity Red Wolves Softball 2025. VanderMeeden primarily plays third base on the field. VanderMeeden has driven in a run in the past five games.

The third baseman has hit 9-15 and driven in 13 runs during a recent 10 streak. VanderMeeden has hit for power this season with 14 home runs, three triples, and 10 doubles among VanderMeeden's 34 hits. VanderMeeden gets ahead in the count fast in the circle. VanderMeeden has thrown first pitch strikes to 66 of the 115 batters they've faced this season.

Paw Paw is 24-1 after a 15-0 and 10-0 sweep on Monday, May 12. In the first game, Paw Paw's Bella Clemons was the winning pitcher, giving up zero hits and zero runs over three innings and striking out five.

VanderMeeden, Elizabeth Vanderburg and Stella Shaver each had two hits for Paw Paw.

In the second game, Vanderburg had three hits. Paw Paw had 10 hits. Carlie Streich had two hits as did Aliya Edison. Lauren MacKellar pitched in the third and struck out the side.

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Lawrence softball team sweeps Comstock

By John Raffel
Correspondent

The Lawrence Tiger softball team took two wins on Monday (May 12) from the Comstock Colts, 24-6 and 15-13.

In game one, the Tigers were hot at the plate. Evelyn Waite led the Tigers with three hits. Other hits were earned by Leslie Reed (one triple), Kelsey Harroun (one double), Hailey Camp (one double), Yuridia San Jaun (one hit), and Kaylin Leyva (one hit). The Tigers locked down defensively to earn the win in four innings.

The Tigers showed their patience at the plate earning 13 walks in game two. Earning hits were Kaylin Leyva (one triple), Kelsey Harroun (one hit), Evelyn Waite (one hit), and Yuridia San Jaun (one hit).

Hailey Camp struck out 11 Colts and Leslie Reed struck out one in the circle.

The Tigers, coached by Ashley Butler, travel to their final away game of the season against Fennville on Thursday evening.

Saturday games

The Lawrence Tiger Softball team went one and one at their annual Tiger tournament, beating Eau Claire in game one and losing to Lawton in game two.

Hailey Camp had an impressive day on the mound, pitching both games (13 innings total) striking out 14 Beavers and 10 Blue Devils.

In Game one, the Tigers were hot at the plate. Leading the tigers in the batter's box were Kaylin Leyva (one single, one triple, two runs) and Leslie Reed (two hits, two runs). Other hits were batted by Hailey Camp (one triple, two runs), Kelsey Harroun (one triple, one run), and Meeghan Haas (one hit). Although the Beavers rallied with four runs in the seventh, the Tigers finished strong earning the win 8-6.

In Game two, the Lawton Blue Devils came out on top. Leslie Reed led the tigers going 3 for 3 with a run. Led by a walk by Sofia Estrada, the Tigers rallied five runs in the top of the fifth inning. Camp batted in two runs on a double. Although the Tigers rallied they fell short to the Blue Devils in six innings. Other hitters for the Tigers were Evelyn Waite and Yuridia San Jaun who also earned a hit each.

Rickli named Kiwanis Student of Month

Paw Paw Kiwanis Club has announced AJ Rickli as its April Student of the Month. Rickli was nominated by her teacher, Shaun Wayman, who said of Rickli, "I am very proud to nominate AJ Rickli for Student of the Month as she has been a rockstar in my homeroom all year. AJ has been an integral part of the week, following up with grades, taking care of crying young people, playing games with students, and helping my homeroom room smoother. Most importantly, she is a model and a great example of what it means to not just be a high-level athlete and student, but a model of what is means to be a great person." Rickli plans to attend Wayne State University and play basketball. She will be studying business and entrepreneurship. She wants to do something to give back to the community. Shown in photo, from left, Kiwanian Patrick Gorenchan, father, Aaron Rickli, Rickli, teacher, Shaun Wayman, and mother, Danielle Rickli.

Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Kiwanis Club

BIG BEAR
CONSIGNMENT AUCTION
Monday, May 26th @ 9:30 a.m.
Located: 5580 M-140, Eau Claire, MI
4 Large Estates Including • 2009 Honda Element • Lawn Equipment • Hit & Miss Engines • Maytag Motors • Vintage Farm Items • Fishing Boats • Camper • Golf Cart • Scooter Motorcycles • Zero Turn Mowers • Many Contractor Tools • Farm Equipment • Lawn Decor • Antique & Modern Décor Furniture • Collectible Glassware • Vintage Woodworking Tools • War Military Collectibles • Remote Control Military Tanks • War Ship Models & Airplanes • War Apparel • Primitive Items • Steam Whistle • Wrought Iron Lawn Décor • Scale Model Cars • Home Safes
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PUBLIC NOTICE

State of Michigan
PROBATE COURT VAN BUREN COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2025-1072-DE • Judge Hon. Susan Metzger
Estate of BONNIE K. THOMPSON, DECEASED
Date of Birth: JANUARY 30, 1952

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Bonnie K. Thompson, died November 15, 2024 (11/15/2024)
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to **Mandi Elsman**, personal representative, or to both the probate court at **212 E. Paw Paw Street, Ste. 220, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079** and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

May 6, 2025

Attorney:
Albert W. Laaksonen, II P43920
226 1/2 East Michigan Ave.
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-655-1035
Personal Representative:
Mandi Elsman
22673 Paulson Road
Gobles, MI 49055
269-998-5317

(05-01)(06-05)

NEW CCS PUB -> COUNTY: VAN BUREN; MTGR: PNC BANK V. DAVID HOLZWORTH; ATTY: TROTT LAW P.C. - TROTT LAW P.C.; 1ST PUB: 5/1/2025; ATTY FILE #: 499675L03; INSURER: (UNKNOWN)
VAN BUREN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT CASE NO. 24-074232-CH NOTICE OF JUDICIAL SALE The property described below shall be sold at public auction, by an authorized sheriff/deputy sheriff or county clerk/deputy county clerk, to the highest bidder, at the Circuit Court for the County of Van Buren, on the 26th of June, 2025 at 1:00 pm, local time. On said day at said time, the following described property shall be sold: The Subject Property is situated in the Township of Porter, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and is particularly described as: Lot 26, Block 2, Sandy Beach, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Liber 4 of Plats, Page 13, Van Buren County Records More commonly known as: 93140 Gravel Lake Dr., Lawton, MI 49065-8429 This notice is from a debt collector. Date of Notice: April, 21, 2025 Trott Law, P.C.
1559666

(05-01)(06-05)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on June 5, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Paul N. Palma and Donna Palma, husband and wife, whose address is 46627 Broadway Drive, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026, as original Mortgagors, to Bank of America, N.A., being a mortgage dated February 18, 2011, and recorded on March 21, 2011 in Liber 1547 Page 338, Van Buren County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated January 23, 2024 and recorded on January 29, 2024 in Liber 1761 Page 392, Van Buren County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of FIFTY-SEVEN THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED NINETY-THREE AND 58/100 DOLLARS ($57,393.58). Said premises are situated in the Township of Arlington, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: LOTS 6 AND 7, BLOCK 13, SCOTT SHORES SUBDIVISION NO. 1, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN LIBER 4 OF PLATS ON PAGE 33, IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS FOR VAN BUREN COUNTY. Street Address: 46627 Broadway Drive, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: May 8, 2025 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490), Johnson, Blumberg, & Associates, LLC, 5955 West Main Street, Suite 509, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. Telephone: (312) 541-9710. File No.: MI 25 6479

(05-08)(05-29)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Ernest Cramer; Atty: Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. - Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A.; 1st Pub: 5/15/2025; Atty File #: 25-000354-1; Insurer: (unknown)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE (ALL COUNTIES) AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM a.m./p.m. on June 12, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by Ernest Cramer of Van Buren County, Michigan, Mortgagor to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated the 9th day of February, 2011, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Van Buren and State of Michigan, on the 24th day of February, 2011, Liber 1546, Page 347, of the Van Buren County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of $28,357.61 plus accrued interest at 8.75000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Antwerp, in the County of Van Buren and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: Situated in the Township of Antwerp, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan REAL ESTATE LOCATED IN SECTION 20, TOWN 3 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, TOWNSHIP OF ANTWERP,COUNTY OF VAN BUREN, STATE OF MICHIGAN, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHEASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF M-119 HIGHWAY AND THE SOUTH LINE OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER BEING 280.88 FEET EAST OF THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE RIGHT OF WAY 99 FEET THENCE NORTHEASTERLY AT RIGHT ANGLES 132 FEET THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY PARALLEL TO SAID HIGHWAY 251.1 FEET TO THE 1/8 LINE THENCE WEST ON 1/8 LINE 201.38 FEET TO BEGINNING. ALSO, BEGINNING 99 FEET NORTHWESTERLY FROM THE INTERSECTION NORTH LINE M-119 HIGHWAY AND THE SOUTH LINE OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER IN SECTION 20 THENCE NORTHWESTERLY 89.15 FEET NORTHERLY AT RIGHT TINGLES 132 FEET SOUTHERLY 89.15 FEET SOUTHWESTERLY 132 FEET TO BEGINNING. Commonly known as: 62941 N M40 Highway, Lawton, MI 49065 Tax ID: 80-02-020-039-10 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. Dated: May 15, 2025 By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email: bhoen@weltman.com WWR#: 25-000354-1

(05-15)(06-05)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Craig A Huber; Atty: Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. - Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C.; 1st Pub: 4/24/2025; Atty File #: 25MI00239-1; Insurer: (unknown)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, May 22, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Craig A Huber, A Single Man to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Central Mortgage Funding, LLC, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated April 20, 2022, and recorded on May 2, 2022, in Liber 1737, Page 551, Van Buren County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated April 04, 2025 and recorded April 09, 2025 in Liber 1777, Page 540, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Twelve Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Five and 55/100 ($112,825.55) including interest at the rate of 4.50000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the City of BANGOR, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: Lot 12, Goss Addition to the Village (now City) of Bangor, a replat of Lots 3 and 13 of Assessor`s Plat of Needleman Addition to the Village (now City) of Bangor, according to the Plat thereof recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 20, Van Buren County Records. Being the same property as transferred by deed dated 05/08/2009, recorded 05/12/2009, from Deborah Paquette, a married woman, to Craig A. Huber, a single man and Diana P. Flynn, a single woman, as joint tenants with full rights of survivorship, recorded in book 1518, page 638 Commonly known as: 109 PROSPECT ST, BANGOR, MI 49013 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: April 24, 2025 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00239-1

(04-24)(05-15)

Casco Township is seeking cost proposals from licensed building contractors to renovate the fire station side of the existing Casco Township Hall located at 7104 107th Ave, South Haven, MI 49090. Download the RFP from www.cascotownship.info.
Bids are due June 16, 2025.

BID ANNOUNCEMENT

AVB Construction, LLC is preparing to clear a site and engineer a metal building for a new Maintenance & Transportation Facility for Mattawan Consolidated Schools. Commencement of Part 1 only, clearing and engineering of the building is scheduled for August 2025. Part 2 for the construction and remainder of the landscaping is anticipated to go out for bid in July 2025.
AVB is performing multiple projects at Mattawan Consolidated Schools over the next 2 years.

Bid Information
Contact Wendy Lockner for access to bidders' instructions, plans and specifications:
wlockner@avbinc.com • 860-874-9577
All bidders must supply a bid bond & a notarized statement of familiar relationship.
Bid Information is available now.

Bids are due:
Tuesday, May 27th at 1:00 PM EST at the Mattawan Consolidated Schools Central Office - 56720
Murray St. Mattawan, MI 49071 (ATTN Pam Stermer, CFO)
There will be a sealed public bid opening immediately following. Late bids will not be considered.

Project Location, Schedule
Mattawan Consolidated Schools
Maintenance & Transportation Part 1 Project
Starts August 2025 – Completion October 2025
(Be looking for Part 2 to bid July 2025 for an October 2025 start)

Scopes of Work Bidding

Part 1 Only: 31.100 Sitework, 13.120 Metal Building Systems

The Van Buren Intermediate School District is now accepting bids for the purchase of four (4) tiny home trailer chassis as outlined in the bid packet. Bid packets are available for download at **www.vbisd.org** under District Services – Business Office. Bids are due **May 22, 2025, at 2:00 PM** at the Van Buren Intermediate School District Business Office, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids received after that time will not be accepted and returned unopened. The Board of Education shall not accept a bid unless it includes both sworn and notarized familial affidavit and Iran linked business affidavit. The Van Buren Intermediate School District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities which it deems to be in the best interest of Van Buren Intermediate School District, and the right to award the contract to other than lowest bidder.

Bloomingdale Township
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take note that the Bloomingdale Township Board will conduct a Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 21,2025 at 6:00pm at the Bloomingdale Municipal Center, 109 E. Kalamazoo Street, Bloomingdale Michigan.

The intent of the Public Hearing is to Vote and hear public comments on the revised Short-Term Rental Ordinance And new Camper/ RV Ordinance.

Melanie Kelly, Bloomingdale Township Clerk

LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

ON THE AMENDMENT OF THE 2024-2025 BUDGET AND THE PROPOSED 2025-26 BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on May 19, 2024, at six o'clock p.m., in Lawton, Michigan, the Board of Education of Lawton Community Schools will hold a public meeting to consider the District's proposed amendment of the 2024-25 budget and the proposed 2025-26 budget.

The Board may not adopt its proposed 2025-26 budget until after a public hearing. A copy of the proposed 2025-2026 budget, including the proposed property tax millage rate, is available for public inspection during normal business hours at 101 Primary Way, Lawton, Michigan.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.[1]

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Larissa Hunt Secretary

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE VILLAGE OF LAWTON

PLEASE TAKE NOTE, The Lawton Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on June 3rd, 2025 at 7:00 pm to receive comments on a proposed amendment to the current Zoning Ordinance in order to add short-term rental use and regulations, amend permitted uses in commercial Industrial Zone districts, as well as adding section 1.10 violations to ordinance, and add section 1.11 to allow administration of the Rental Inspection ordinance.
Those who are unable to attend are encouraged to submit written comments to the Village Manager at **clerk@lawtonmi.org** or the below-mentioned address. Written comments must be received before 4:00 pm May 30th, 2025.
The Village will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon four (4) business days' notice to the Village Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Village Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.
This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (MCL 41.72a (2)(3)) and the Americans with Disabilities Act. A copy of this notice is on file at Lawton Village Hall, located at 125 S. Main Street, PO Box 367, Lawton MI 49065, phone: 269.624.6407 as well as on our website at **www.lawtonmi.org**

Brittany Rathbun, Village Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE VILLAGE OF LAWTON

PLEASE TAKE NOTE, The Lawton Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on June 3rd, 2025 at 7:00 pm to receive comments on a proposed amendment to the current Zoning Ordinance in order to regulate wireless communications facilities as well as wind and solar energy within the Village limits.

Those who are unable to attend are encouraged to submit written comments to the Village Manager at **clerk@lawtonmi.org** or the below-mentioned address. Written comments must be received before 4:00 pm May 30th, 2025.
The Village will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon four (4) business days' notice to the Village Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Village Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (MCL 41.72a (2)(3)) and the Americans with Disabilities Act. A copy of this notice is on file at Lawton Village Hall, located at 125 S. Main Street, PO Box 367, Lawton MI 49065, phone: 269.624.6407 as well as on our website at **www.lawtonmi.org**

Brittany Rathbun, Village Clerk

Greater understanding and awareness of autism is needed

By James Windell

Since Taryn Hetrick's son was diagnosed with autism, she says she has become an "autism expert" because of her hands-on experience.

Speaking recently about autism at a South Haven City Council Meeting, Hetrick said that "Autism is not a limitation; it's a different way of experiencing the world." Based on her daily experiences with her son, she said that she has come to learn that each autistic individual "has their own unique set of challenges."

Autism, which is a developmental disorder that causes problems with social communication and interaction with others, has been in the news recently because the Center For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has just reported that one in every 31 eight-year-olds in the U.S. is affected with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism has also been in the news lately because the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has said that "autism destroys families" and is an "individual tragedy as well."

Dr. Caleb Springsteen, a Bronson Healthcare pediatrician in South Haven, sees a great many children who meet the criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder in his practice. Aware of the CDC research showing one in 31 children have the symptoms for ASD, he indicates that he, too, has seen an increase in children with the disorder. Springsteen says he is not sure what is responsible for the steep rise in autism, but he indicates that there are several likely reasons.

"I think there is better recognition, so we are doing a better job of watching for it," Springsteen says. "But, also, families and teachers are doing a better job of watching for it. In addition, I think that we're not stigmatizing it as much. We are more likely to see it as another way of going through life – and it's not necessarily a bad thing."

Although there has been speculation in recent years that autism is sometimes caused by vaccinations, Springsteen dispels this myth. "Immunizations do not cause autism," he says. "This has been shown over and over in the research not to be the case."

He also adds that autism is not caused by parenting. "There is a genetic aspect to autism," he explains, "but there is not one gene you look for to determine if someone has autism. However, there are likely several genes that increase the risk of having autism."

Like other physicians and mental health professionals, Springsteen relies on the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) to provide the latest standardized criteria to help diagnose ASD. To meet the diagnostic criteria for ASD according to the DSM-5, a child must have persistent deficits in each of three areas of social communication and interaction, such as social and emotional communication and non-verbal communication, plus at least two of four types of restricted, repetitive behaviors (for instance, stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, lining up toys, or an inflexible adherence to routines).

Dr. Springsteen does routine screening for autism and these screenings usually start at about 18 months. "We're watching signs of autism during wellness visits with children," he says. "We try to catch if kids have differences in the way they communicate, if they struggle with social interactions, have these stereotypical or repetitive behaviors, or trouble with transitions."

He says that his office does not diagnose autism. "We send them to a specialist, usually a developmental pediatrician or a psychologist who would make the diagnosis," he says.

His role as a pediatrician, he adds, is first screening, but after that to be a local support to families. "If a family learns that their child has autism, since we have been through this process many times, we can help give parents guidance on how to talk about what life is like when a child has been diagnosed with autism."

Dr. Springsteen says that there are things parents can do to help their child diagnosed with ASD. "The first thing is to talk with the pediatrician," he says. "Then, talk with the school. Also, work with an autism center where you could choose to meet with other families who have kids with autism. The main thing is get to know your child's diagnosis and learn all you can about ways to make things go smoother."

Among the resources in the South Haven area is Michigan Alliance for Families, which provides information, education and support for families with young children. Taryn Hetrick is a Parent Mentor at the Michigan Alliance for Families serving the Van Buren County area. She can be reached at teryn@michiganallianceforfamilies.org or 269-934-9471.

VILLAGE OF PAW PAW
COUNTY OF VAN BUREN, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING POLICE PROTECTION SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, in August 2017, the Village Council of the Village of Paw Paw voted to raise money by special assessment for police protection pursuant to Act 33 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1951, as amended ("Act 33"). Following a public hearing held by the Village Council on August 14, 2017, the Council adopted a resolution creating the Police Special Assessment District, to defray the costs and expenses of police protection within the Village.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Village Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 7:00pm at the Paw Paw District Library, 609 W Michigan Ave, Paw Paw, MI 49079, Community Room, to review and hear any objections to the special assessment roll spreading the 2025 cost and expenses on all land and premises in the Village not exempt from the collection of taxes under the Michigan General Property Tax Act. The assessments on the roll are to be billed on the July summer tax bill.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Police Fund Budget (Police Protection, Parking Enforcement and Ordinance Enforcement) for the fiscal year commencing March 1, 2025, is estimated at $1,649,065.00 of which $285,702.38 is to be raised by a 3.00 mills ($3.00 per $1,000.00 of taxable value) special assessment levy on all village properties. **This is a renewal, not an increase. This millage will be reflected in your summer tax bill, do not pay separately.**

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the proposed special assessment roll may be inspected at Village Hall, 111 E Michigan Ave, Paw Paw, MI 49079 on regular business days and may also be inspected at the public hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that any person objecting to the said assessment roll shall file a written objection thereto with the Village Clerk before the close of said hearing, or within such further time the Village Council may grant.

AN OWNER OR A PARTY IN INTEREST IN A LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND SUBJECT TO A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT MAY FILE A WRITTEN APPEAL OF THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT WITH THE MICHIGAN TAX TRIBUNAL WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF CONFIRMATION OF THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ROLL, BUT ONLY IF SAID OWNER OR PARTY IN INTEREST APPEARS AND PROTESTS THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT AT THIS HEARING. An appearance may be made by an owner or party in interest, or his or her agent, in person or, in the alternative, an appearance or protest can be filed with the Village by letter prior to the hearing, in which case a personal appearance at the hearing is not required.

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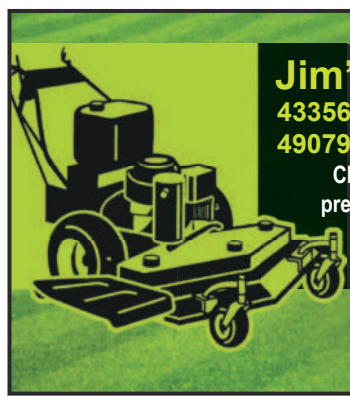

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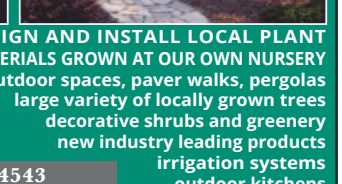

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